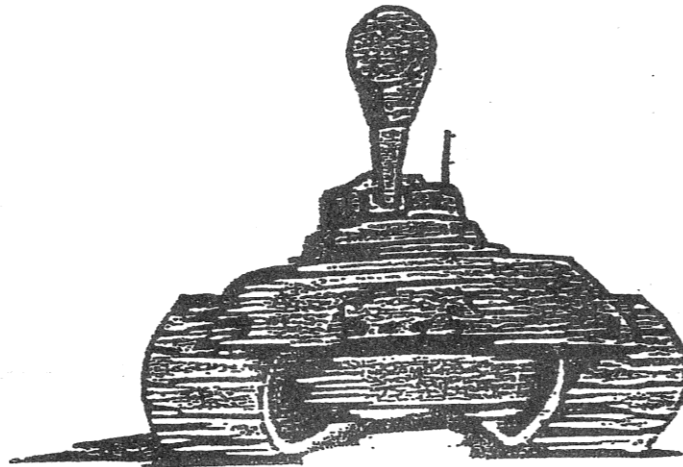


Rules of Engagement:

**Winning the War Against
Student Apathy**



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I. Overview

II. The Importance of Relationships to Learning and Achievement: What we know,
What we do, What we try

III. Relationships in our Schools: The Stakeholders, The ties, The needs

IV. Strategies That Work: Plan to Allow Relationships to Flourish

V. What The Students Say/What The Teachers Say: I Feel

VI. Summary

Student Response to this Statement:

Since you are in _____ School, you have known many teachers and been in many classrooms. Take a minute and think of the very best classroom and the very best teacher you have ever known. What did the Teacher do? What was going on? What did the teacher act like? Why was it best? Describe how you felt in class. Please just put down your feelings and descriptions. Thank you.

The Teacher: _____ or _____ I felt:

- 7F - "She is in control and she helps out a lot. She makes me feel like I'm worth something.
- 8F - "A light attitude was kept. I always felt happy and comfortable."
- 6M - "She helps me on my work. She made me feel happy."
- 8F - "Her classroom is so comfortable, and a good learning environment to be in."
- 8F - "She was understanding and helped with everything."
- 6M - "She helps you understand very easy."
- 6M - "She respected me and listened to me. I felt great in that class because she was nice to everybody and she never yelled."
- 7F - "Was involved in your personal life. If you needed someone to talk to she would talk with you."
- 8M - "I felt relaxed."
- 8M - "She has very high expectations. Gives us constant various assignments. She acts nice but expects us to behave. When we do outstanding work she bakes for us!"
- 8M - "I felt welcome."
- 7F - "Her mom makes me feel safe."
- 7M - "Had a positive attitude. Took time to teach every student."
- 7M - "I could always go and talk with him whenever I needed to. I got upset over getting switched into OHI and felt depressed, but he helped and said I could still get help from him anytime."
- 7F - "She acts kind and courteous and always lets me help her."
- 8F - "She was a teacher a kid could relate to. She knows what kids like and want and has a fun and unique way of teaching it."
- 8M - "She told stories about her kids. I went to her class. I always felt happy."
- 8M - "She was always fair and had her own style of making you want to do better."
- 8M - "Punishes whoever is guilty regardless of what kind of student they are."
- 8M - "Always there to help and she acts so nice and never gets frustrated. Every time I walk into her classroom things always get better for me. Always has a smile on her face."
- 8F - "Took time out to help you. She was nice, generous, sweet and a wonderful teacher. I felt I wanted to take up and go to school. She brightens up my day. She was like another friend."
- 8F - "Had our class under control."
- 8F - "He did goofy things to make me laugh."
- 6F - "She treated everyone the same and acted mature and responsible."
- 6F - "Is so nice and friendly."
- 6M - "Was fun but not when you got on her bad side."
- 7M - "I don't have or have not been to a very best classroom or teacher."
- 6M - "Would let us feed the rabbits."
- 8M - "Makes everything we do in his class fun."
- 6F - "She makes you feel very comfortable. Very special to me."
- 6F - "I think all of the teachers should be strict. She helps you when you don't feel good. Says I love to touch kids lives."

Teacher responses to:

- (1) The reason relationships are important with my students is because:
- 2) What things do you do or characteristics do you have which makes relationships a strong area for you:

"Many students never have anyone on which to depend. I try to be that person. I try to be available for sharing time."

"Love, smile, big shoulders, give materials which are needed, purchase dance tickets, books or other items of importance, always being available."

"If they like, trust and respect you, they will work harder."

"Try to remember they are kids with fluctuating hormones, emotions, coming from different backgrounds. Therefore, compassion is my strongest characteristic. Also, I think one should live their life with joy and share it."

"Human beings discover themselves through the thoughts and words of others many times. The better the relationship I have with my students, the more likely they are to discuss how they feel and what they learned about themselves."

"Sense of humor, empathy, The Golden Rule."

"A good relationship often prevents or diffuses conflicts. If students know you care and are fair, conflicts don't often occur."

"Listen to them, have a sense of humor, pick your battles, be honest with students, speak respectfully to them, be (above all) consistent."

"Smile a lot! A Soft Voice and a Smile are the keys to a happy day."

"God gave me this task in this moment of time to finish and it involves working with individuals many other folks would not choose to "Waste Time" with."

"I refuse to delenate any child as "at risk" anymore. This sad label has resulted in dollars funded to "programs" rather than students."

"If students know that a teacher sincerely cares about them, they strive to reach their potential."

"I try to give my students opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions and I listen to them."

Talk to students on an individual basis."

"They observe how we respond when they ask questions, when a person is incorrect, when there is a conflict and when a child has a problem, I believe they respond to us by how much they feel we care about them and their work."

"I try to tell personal experiences about growing up to make points. Praise. Behaviors."

"At this age in particular, many (or most) students don't need as much a teacher as they can use a friendly smile and sympathetic ear."

"Willingness to show my own imperfections sure help make it easier to get student to cooperate."

"It makes them feel that they can ask you questions when they don't understand something."

"Tones of specific, real praise – on paper, in person. I also share a little of myself with them – my family, my hobbies, my weekend, etc., Casual conversations in between classes about their interests and activities outside of school."

"The students need to trust me and that trust comes from being sensitive to who they are and what they are about."

"I treat my students as individuals – I listen to them – I try to put myself in their shoes."

"They must trust you as a friend and teacher. They must know that you are "on their side". They must know that you care about all aspects of their lives."

"I never "bait" or "set them up" for failure, while at the same time holding them accountable. I try to make them feel very important by giving them my undivided attention. I try and greet each one with a smile, make them feel welcome, and understand that they have a life outside of my class."

Failure to communicate is the responsibility of both speaker and listener. Listen, really listen, to the desires of a person with attention difficulties and language processing problems.

Talk to Me – A Plea for Sensitive Communication

Please be patient with me. I'm interested in what you have to say.

Please make sure I'm listening. I don't always know when I'm not.

Don't get angry with me. It's already hard for me to attend and understand. The extra pressure will only distract me.

Sometimes long complex sentences confuse me. Please keep them short.

Easier vocabulary usually helps me understand.

It's OK to repeat what you said. I won't be insulted. It helps me understand.

Don't get irritated when I ask you to repeat. It only means I want to understand you.

Can you rephrase what you said before? Saying it in a different way may help me understand.

Please explain that abstract word. I didn't understand it.

The slower you speak the more I am able to listen and understand you.

If I appear distracted, please help me refocus. I didn't fade away on purpose.

Please allow me time to think about your information. I really need that extra time.

Don't hurry me. It keeps me from thinking clearly and expressing my thoughts to you.

I didn't mean to be short with you. I couldn't help it. Next time I'll try to take my time and think before I act.

I am a good person. Please give me the same courtesy you would anyone else.

Things to say to encourage a child

Say: You're incredible.

Don't say: What's wrong with you?

Say: Hold that thought so we can discuss this later.

Don't say: Shut up.

Say: That's an innovative and creative way of doing it.

Don't say: That's stupid.

Say: I'm really proud of you when you accept responsibility.

Don't say: Why don't you do your job and stop whining.

Say: Remember to say, "Excuse me."

Don't say: Stop butting in when I'm talking.

Say: You did a wonderful job, you're going to become a great . . .

Don't say: That's nice.

Say: Explain why to me why you did that, it would have never occurred to me to do it that way.

Don't say: Why did you do such a stupid thing?

Say: I'm really proud of the way you handled that.

Don't say: You'd better had done what I told you.

Say: What type of things would you like to do today?

Don't say: I don't care what you want to do.

Say: I appreciate your thoughts, however we aren't going to discuss this anymore.

Don't say: I don't care what you think.

Say: How do you feel about this?

Don't say: Who cares how you feel.

Say: Can I count on you to help me?

Don't say: You'd better do it, because I said do it!

Say: I'd like to introduce you to my son, he dreams of one day becoming a great . . .

Don't say: Yeah, that's my son, he drives me crazy.

Say: I love you, I'll see you in the morning.

Don't say: Go to bed.

Don't say: Why didn't you do . . .

Say: "I love you," more than you yell.

Say: "I love you," more than you criticize.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE

Author unknown

- 1. Keep skid chains on your tongue; always say less than you think... Cultivate a low, persuasive voice. How you say it often counts more than what you say.**
- 2. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully, no matter what it costs you.**
- 3. Never let an opportunity pass to say a kind and encouraging thing to or about somebody.**
- 4. Be interested in others; interested in their pursuits, their welfare, their homes and families.**
- 5. Be cheerful! Keep the corners of your mouth turned up. Hide your pains, worries and disappointments under a smile.**
- 6. Preserve an open mind on all debatable questions. Discuss, but not to argue. It is a mark of superior minds to disagree and yet to be friendly.**
- 7. Let your virtues, if you have any, speak for themselves, and refuse to talk of another person's vices. Discourage gossip.**
- 8. Be careful of another's feeling. Wit and humor at the other person's expense are rarely worth the effort, and my hurt where least expected.**
- 9. Pay no attention to ill-natured remarks about you. Disordered nerves and digestion are a common cause of backbiting.**
- 10. Don't be too anxious about your dues. Do your work, be patient and keep your disposition sweet, forget self, and you will be rewarded.**

Everybody's Talking at Me

COMMUNICATION ROADBLOCKS

Listed below on the left hand side are some roadblocks to communication. When people use these behaviors, they often prevent communication from taking place.

Read each set of descriptive words and think of an example of how someone has acted this way to prevent communication.

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR

EXAMPLE

BLAMER

1. Orders, directs, commands
2. Warns, threatens
3. Moralizes, preaches
4. Judges, criticizes, blames
5. Name-calls, ridicules, shames

You said: "I'd like to do ..."
The Blamer responded:

PLEASER

6. Obliges
7. Praises, agrees, approves
8. Reassures, sympathizes, consoles

You said: "I think I ..."
The Pleaser responded:

COMPUTER

9. Advises, gives solutions
10. Lectures, persuades logically
11. Probes, interrogates

You said "I'm really interested in..."
The Computer responded:

DISTRACTOR

12. Withdraws, distracts
13. Humors, diverts

You said: "I'm planning to ..."
The Distractor responded:

Instructional Survey

DIRECTIONS: Circle the best response for each question.

1. My teacher expects students to do their best.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. My teacher expects me to do my best.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. My teachers are understanding when students have personal problems.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. My teachers set high standards for learning in their classes.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. My teachers help me gain confidence in my ability to learn.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. My teachers know me well.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. My teacher listens to my ideas.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. My teachers care about me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. My teachers make me learn.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. My teachers make learning fun.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. My teachers are excited about the subject they teach.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. My teachers give me individual attention when I need it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. In my classes, time is spent listening to the teacher talk.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. In my class, time is spent in whole class discussions.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. In my classes, time is spent working in small groups.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. In my classes, time is spent answering questions from a book or worksheet.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

17. In my classes, time is spent working on projects or research.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. In my classes, time is spent doing work that I find meaningful.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

19. In my classes, time is spent using computers.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

20. I learn well when I am working on projects or research.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Instructional Survey

21. I learn well when the teacher is leading a discussion with the whole class.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

22. I learn well when I am working in a small group.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

23. I learn well when I am working by myself.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

24. I read and write every day in every class.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

25. I feel there are enough opportunities to receive tutoring at my school.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Directions: Please provide written responses for the following questions.

26. What would make your classes more interesting?

27. What is your most difficult class? What makes it so difficult?

28. What other kinds of classes would you like to see our school have?

Additional Comments:

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Commandments for Peace & Tranquility

In The Classroom

1. Thou shalt always remember ever to say always and never.
2. Thou shalt refrain from asking why and what and all that other stuff that creates dialogue.
3. Thou shalt praise publicly and reprimand privately.
4. Thou shalt at all times remain firmly consistent.
5. Thou shalt remember that children have a right to make a mistake, student rules (modeling).
6. Thou shalt refrain from the double standard of adult rules and student rules (modeling).
7. Thou shalt remember the Golden Rule and always encourage mutual respect and dignity.
8. Thou shalt not engage in the self-fulfilling prophesy of the “bad” child.
9. Thou shalt find time in thy busy schedule to really listen to thy students.
10. Thou shalt at no time take thyself too seriously.